The

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Notes of the Month.

The month of June is always important in respect to our Church and its institutions, and this year the events arranged will make a strong appeal to many of our readers. First in point of time, and not least in point of importance, is the Sunday School Conference, which will be held on June 7th at Larne. Although we cannot hope that the attendances will be equal to pre-war totals, we nevertheless believe that the hospitality of our Larne Congregation will receive the response it deserves.

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As is customary, three of our Church bodies, the Remonstrant Synod, the Association of Irish Non-Subscribing Presbyterians, and the General Synod, will assemble on the third week in June in the 1st Presbyterian Church, Belfast. Tuesday, June 17th is set apart for the meetings of the two first-named, while on the evening of the same day United Service will be held in the above Church. Wednesday, June 18th, will be marked by the usual Communion Service, the meetings of the General Synod, the Annual Dinner, and the Lecture to be given this year by Dr. Mellone. It is hoped also to have time set apart for a meeting of the Union for Social Service, the latest organisation in connection with our Non-Subscribing Church. Congregational notices will be given in due course of all these assemblies. We call attention to them here in order that we may appeal earnestly for our readers' practical support.

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We are glad to learn that the Rev. E. S. Hicks, of Dublin, whose state of health induced his Congregation to give him two months' leave of absence, is considerably benefited by holidays in England, and is expected to resume his duties on the first Sunday of this month. During his absence several of our ministers from the North of Ireland have been responsible for the supply of the Dublin pulpit, thus cementing the friendly ties that unite our Non-Subscribing Church with its Southern friends. It is to be hoped that Mr. Hicks' health and energy will have fully regained that robustness which his acquaintances associate with his normal condition of activity.

It would seem that June is to have the honour of being Peace month. Owing to the extension of time granted to the German plenipotentiaries for consideration of the Peace terms, the actual signing will fall later than we imagined. We do not doubt that the Germans will perceive the wisdom of affixing their signature, for the Allies are in a position of such superiority that they can enforce their will and bring recalcitrants to surrender. If the terms are severe they are less stringent than those a victorious Germany would have imposed. Too lenient terms in this case would lessen the value of the object lesson militarism needed, viz. —that the peace of the world cannot be ruthlessly disturbed without penalty. International law thereby justifies itself and makes international wrong-doing less likely to occur in the future.

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In these columns we have made reference from time to time to matters educational, emphasising the need of more adequate equipment of the schools and more fitting remuneration of the teachers. Consequently, we learned with the greatest interest and gratification that the Government are drafting a Bill to deal with the whole of Irish education. That is the only logical sequel to the recent reports on primary and secondary education. Both alike made plain how far Ireland was behind England and Scotland in this important matter. Belfast had made proposals to deal with education so far as it affected that City and district. But, in view of the wider scope of the Government proposals, the need of sectional provision disappears. We hope that Ireland is shortly to receive a generous and far-reaching scheme which shall put the national education on a broad and satisfactory basis. The new world in which we live cannot afford to leave its most precious asset, human faculty, undeveloped. To make the most of the children is to have the further result of enabling them to make the most of life.

A Thought for the Month

"A NEEDED REVIVAL."

"To walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

—COLOSSIANS i. 10.

"The religious revival we ought to long for, pray for, and work for, is a revival that shall affect the morals of the Church as well as its worship and religious sentiment, and ennoble the whole life of those who bear the Christian name. The power of the Church depends quite as much on the steadfast justice, the courageous truthfulness, the tender mercy of Christian people, as on the soundness of their creed and the fervour of their religious zeal.

I long to see the day when the faith of the Church shall be so strong that the promise of God will be the adequate consolation of all Christian people in their earthly sorrows, and when the great hope of immortal glory will fill their hearts with perpetual gladness and their lips with a perpetual song; when the Church will be inspired with a more fervent love and thankfulness in the presence of the cross of Christ and with a more passionate loyalty to His throne; when worship will cease to be a weariness, and when in prayer all Christian men will approach God with perfect confidence in His power and willingness to answer them. But I also long to see the time when the Church will discover in the teaching and example of Christ the outlines of a far diviner morality; when the noblest natural ethics will look poor and dim compared with the ideal of perfection for which the Church will strive, and which, in the strength of the Spirit of God, it will largely fulfil; when the equity, truthfulness, frankness, courage, industry, patience, temperance, self-sacrifice, public spirit, gentleness, charity of those who bear the Christian name, will be a perpetual demonstra-

tion of the presence and the power of the Holy Ghost.

A moral revival is as necessary as a revival of faith and of the religious affections. It is not our own salvation merely which is at stake, though our personal peril ought to create alarm, if, while, professing to trust in the love of God, we are habitually violating His law; if our religious faith and fervour do not in any sense palliate our moral guilt, but aggravate it, and, instead of averting ultimate condemnation, will only make it more terrible, But the authority of the Christian faith is also at stake. If Christian men are not actually controlled in their common life by all that they profess to believe; if their worship has no effect upon their common work, they are contributing more powerfully to the temporary triumph of scepticism than the writers who are most hostile to religious truth."—"Laws of Christ for Common Life," by Dr. R. W. Dale.

BROTHERS IN NEED.

All the world has been recalling the romance of the birth of Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic,' and if to souls departed any desire yet remains of what mortals call fame, she must be satisfied. More than half a century has passed since the verses were wedded to an air said to be of Methodist origin, though known mostly as the Abolitionist slogan "John Brown's Body." We believe Sir John M'Clure is not alone in estimating the music as somewhat beneath the dignity of public hymnody; but for the purpose in view it still serves, and we have no expectation that the more decorous compositions that have been put forward with a view to saving the poetry for congregational use will oust the old tune. Will ever time, we wonder, the invention of deadly weapons quite terrible, or the increase of human wisdom, or all these combined, render the little lady's martial song obsolete; or is it destined to echo on through the centuries a Western counterpoint to Rouget de l'Isle's "Marseilleise"? If again of souls departed we may predict desire, it is probable that Julia Ward Howe could be well content if nevermore there should be need of her or any other poet's "Battle" cry.

For she was, not only in sentiment but in action, an apostle of brotherhood. Her ninety years and more were filled with the spirit and the activity of broadest sympathy. Her husband, Dr. S. Gridley Howe, was not more famously zealous in his efforts to save the blind than she was through all her years to uplift and cheer the strangers who from many lands streamed into her land hoping that it might also be their own. All who were "seeking for liberty," political or religious, were dear to her warm charity. "New Americans," as they are called, were a special object of her care. With a large welcome that certain of us might deem impolitic she wished to open the gates of civic freedom to all who were fugitive from the despotisms of Europe. Skilled in the languages of different nations she the more easily entered into the human sorrows and aspirations of those who came of alien stock. In her breadth of sympathy, in short, she could be as impolitic as Christ.

When it came to questions of religion Mrs. Howe was naturally just as broad-minded. We remember, among the copious verse which she poured forth, the hymn of "Welcome" which she wrote for the International Conference of Unitarians and other Liberals at Boston in 1907, where, as she phrased it, "the messengers of many nations, diverse in feature, argument, and creed," came together "one in their errand, brothers in their need." A far different Conference has been meeting in these fateful months at Paris; yet could she possibly have guessed—who could?—that within a few years of her death the United States armies would have marched to her words in European warfare, and that her country would be an active partner in shaping the destinies of the nations, we cannot suppose her sentiments would have

altered. Nay, the "need" in which men of different race are "brothers" is now made obvious indeed. She wrote, on the occasion to which we refer, of the one sunshine that brightens all the earth, the one law of right that claims the obedience of all, the one high purpose that should animate us, and the one "prayer that other prayer controls—that light divine may visit human souls." Such things should certainly impress us all with the essential unity of humankind; but to-day a heavier hand is laid upon the nations, if by any means they may be led to understand and live wisely together. They are "brothers in need" of food and the mere elements of bodily life. War has wasted the capital of the world; we are shackled with debts, productive energy has been drained away on the battlefield, violent passions have used up much of the sane and sober wisdom of men. If ever we needed much, and needed it in common, it is now. We have not seen a woman at the Peace Conference table; of course a woman may be grateful to have had the honour of singing the troops into action. But we doubt if a little of Julia Ward Howe's counsel and generous temper might not have somewhat assisted the great men weary who have been discussing terms these many days. If we are not mistaken, there seems to be a growing belief that we shall only get out of the horrible situation we are in by recognising that our "need" is universal, and that the Christian theory of "brotherhood" is astonishingly practical, and that only by some method of sharing our burdens and pooling our resources can we escape overwhelming and irretrievable ruin.—From "The Inquirer."

A Book for the Month.

"CHRISTIANITY IN THE NEW AGE."

That we are at the beginning of a new age is one of the few certainties of these uncertain times. It is inconceivable that the four years of titanic struggle through which we have passed should leave the old order undisturbed. Not only are there to be new geographical boundaries, but there is a new spirit in international politics and a world-wide industrial unrest which must issue in far-reaching changes. How Christianity will fare in the new age is a question of surpassing importance, and every thoughtful book on the subject commands our earnest attention. "Christianity in the New Age," by E. Herman, is well worth careful study. The first part deals with "Perils of the Threshold." These perils are—(1) Detachment from the past, and (2) the snare of pessimism. In speaking of detachment from the past as a peril, our author is not pleading for a retention of ancient forms, but is teaching the useful lesson that every great crisis in history appears to those who pass through it as a cleaving sword severing the past from the present, whereas the law of evolution really does continue to operate. We cannot escape from the past: consciously or unconsciously it influences our thought—it were better to let it be consciously so that we can exercise some control. Then as to pessimism, it is of two kinds—pessimism concerning the state of the world and concerning the state of the Church. We must remember that "the religion of Jesus is not made for seminaries and spiritual coteries: its field is the world, and to narrow that field by one furrow is to rob our Lord." We must so understand the inner meaning of wars, rebellions, and strikes as to see that, though men and nations are stumbling and falling in disastrous night, they are yet hoping for the perfect day. The world is a field white unto harvest, and the Church should be venturesome and great-hearted to turn this restless energy into right channels. "To such a Church organized in the name of Christ, seeking, not to impress herself upon the world, but only to serve the ends of his kingdom and to build that kingdom with the material of his ordering, the test of numbers will not

apply. It is constituted wherever two or three are gathered together in Christ's name. It is not exclusive. It sets up no external tests, whether of ecclesiastical adherence, which would make it schismatic, or of assent to a creed, which would stamp it as sectarian, or of character, which would rank it with the Pharisees and Scribes against its Master."

The second part deals with "The Christian Message to the New Age." We hear a lot in these days about unity, but we must first know what we are to unite upon. "In our reaction against intellectualism and the tyranny of the theologian, in the interests of the spiritual life we have tended to forget that life is everywhere blind and inarticulate except as it is lived under the power of truth. We lament our lack of moral and spiritual dynamic, and, as a rule, we mean nothing more by the term than a great uprush of emotion often resulting in spectacular action. What we really and supremely need is the dynamic of a clear, steady, spacious vision, and of a disciplined, progressive apprehension of the truth." The Church has nothing to fear in the new age from the demand for fearless thinking and clear utterance; she has much to fear from lack of the old feeling of true brotherhood. Too often it is true that "there is more grief in Church circles over one rich man that departeth than over ninety and nine poor persons who never come near the Church." Our war experiences should teach us the meaning of the Cross—that no price is too high to pay for the liberation of man from sordid materialism, and that the only life worth living is that freely given to a good cause—not lent with calculating intent, but flung down with the superb generosity of youth.

The third part is entitled "The Great Adventure." Christianity is not a tame and passive religion; it should meet new conditions with a fearless theology and adventurous ethics. "For one man who rejects Christianity because he misunderstands it, ten reject it because they understand it too well—because they know it is a call to the selfless and sacrificial life." But our young men have shown that they can respond to the call of adventure; let Christianity be presented to them as the greatest adventure of all, not for king and country, but for God and humanity, for Christ and his kingdom.

SOCIAL SERVICE NOTES.

[The Editor has courteously placed the space under this heading at the disposal of the N.S.P.C.I. Union for Social Service, and the Union will supply material for it regularly every month.]

The attention of all members of our Churches and other friends is directed to the Conference on Social Questions arranged by the Union for Social Service on the occasion of the Annual Synod Meetings of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church. The Conference will be held in the Central Hall on Wednesday, June 18th, at 3-30, and will be opened by a speech from Rev. S. H. Mellone, M.A., D.SC., and the Moderator will take the chair. Afternoon tea will be served prior to the Conference.

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Considering the encouraging beginning made by the Union for Social Service, further results have been rather disappointing. At a time when it is almost universally admitted that no Christian Church can long survive which does not stand the test of social service on a more comprehensive scale than hitherto known, it would seem as if the social conscience in our body of Churches were limited to a score or so. We are being left high and dry, playing no part of any consequence in the social life of the communities in which we dwell. The Union for Social Service offers an escape from this empty remoteness; but so far very few of our Church members have even ventured so far as to send the minimum subscription of 1s., and our influential laity have, with one or two exceptions

done nothing whatever to encourage the work either by their presence, voice, or purse. Yet the Union cannot be carried on without funds. Hence not only do we appeal for new members, but also for our wealthier laity to send us donations.

E. H. PICKERING, Hon. Sec.

APOSTACY FFOM UNITARIANISM.

The term apostate carries a reproach. It denotes one who has deserted his associates: one who *stands away from* them. To them, retaining the same loyalty as before, he appears to have become a traitor. Hitherto they had looked to him as *gathering* with them. Now they know, whatever he was really doing before, he will be *scattering* for the future. Actually, apostacy, however painful to those who find themselves abandoned, may be a course approved by the conscience of the one who has taken his departure. Saint Paul could almost boast in retrospect of his Pharisaic zeal for Judaism: yet when he espoused Christianity he became an apostate from Judaism. The term is usually applied to one who has fallen away from orthodoxy: that is, from "right," "correct," "proper," "authorised" teaching. But it may just as well be applied to departure from the heterodoxy (i.e., "other teaching") of a Unitarian standpoint in favour of the vaunted orthodoxy; and, with more justice in such a case, may the term be employed to convey reproach. The conscientious apostate from orthodoxy declares that he detects falacies in the teaching he had hitherto uncritically taken as a matter of course; that he has discovered that teaching to be but *spurious* orthodoxy. He has arrived at the conviction that he had been accepting for the word of God that which he now perceives to have been the mere tradition of men. He has now taken up a new position, towards which in the measure of light vouchsafed a persual of the truth appeared to him to direct his steps. Unlike him, the apostate from Unitarianism repudiates his duty of proving all things and holding fast that which is good; abandons that diligent quest of truth he had formerly viewed as a responsibility inseparably attached to the Divine faculty of human intelligence; shuns the proximity of those who by reason of their profound learning and patent wisdom had often been as lamps unto his feet in the dark places of his path; and like one "neighbour Pliable, rather than flounder through the slough of faithful scepticism and face the threatened troubles of the further pilgrimage towards Celestial truth, and lacking the courage to await full knowledge which can be attained only beyond the dark, dread waters of the bourne of death, returns with easy steps (or seven-league leaps) to the pretended certainties of mental indolence. That mental indolence he regards as peace of mind, and so it well might be if peace were rest. But is it peace of conscience? Surely not, since conscience, so long as it is with us in our way, will never rest. Like Israel's keeper, conscience slumbers not nor sleeps.

The strangest feature common to ordinary cases of apostacy from Unitarianism is the profession of the apostate, that the steps he has taken, and which seem so sadly retrograde to his former associates, have been the consequence of conscientious investigation of probability. Sometimes he will present the world, including incidentally his old companions (possibly not without a special view to them) with a specimen of his argument by way of showing how reasonable and logical he has tried to be. He thinks he has arrived at a rational conclusion upon one point, or it may be upon several points, as a result of conscientious inquiry and reflection, after which he persuades himself (though hardly the rest of the world and certainly not the Unitarian part of it) that he may conscientiously throw himself into the arms of some sect calling itself orthodox, and accept, without further question or misgiving, the whole body of its elaborate system of theological dogma.

It is as if he had carefully, even conscientiously perhaps, strained at the wing of a gnat and the legs of a fly, after which he thinks himself qualified —though who else can see why— to swallow the whole of a camel!

UNITED SERVICE IN TEMPLEPATRICK.

Every man's interpretation of the innumerable phenomena of the world and of human life is determined by a comparatively few fundamental ideas, the *principia* of his reasoned thought— still, as of old man by himself is priced.

For thirty pieces Judas sold himself, not Christ. It is the set of the soul that decides its goal. The child is father of the man. A uniform theology once supposed to pervade the New Testament and to carry the seal of Divine Authority, has broken up, on more accurate research into several distinct types, and each succeeding age, in taking up the chorus, puts in some quality of tone not heard before. Every man has his own peculiar perfume of soul. Protestantism on its intellectual side rests on free inquiry and private judgment, but its devotion springs out of an inner faith, which gives to the voices of—a Wesley, a Newman, a Martineau—(while seemingly discordant to the intellect) a spiritual *harmony*. Though their followers are fed at different tables, they are all fed with the same Bread of Life and their lips are touched with the same Wine of Remembrance. Even the intellectual diversity between these types is being steadily reduced till ultimately men will agree as nearly in theology as they now do in astronomy, till—

"That in us which thinks and that which feels
Shall everlastingly be reconciled,
And that which questioneth with that which kneels."

A congregation of nearly two hundred gathered in Templepatrick, at 3-30, on Sunday, May 18th, when Crumlin, Ballyclare, and Antrim Congregations joined with Templepatrick at the Moderator's suggestion. The service was opened by Rev. G. V. Crook, of Antrim, the lessons were read by Revs. P. Godding, of Ballyclare, and S. E. Bowen, of Crumlin, while the sermon, based on the words of Jesus—"Greater works than these shall he do"—was delivered by Rev. Alfred Turner, of Templepatrick. The preacher gave illustrations of the great things accomplished in earth, air, and sea, in science, literature, and art, by man. Jesus was the moral uplifter of humanity. The world of to-day, amidst all the great things being accomplished, needed His moral uplift more than ever, and a greater world-wide moral reconstruction than was possible through the short life of Jesus on earth, was promised to His disciples *if* they would do as He told them. "Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit," "greater works than mine shall ye do." The only point in the sermon that we would take exception to was the stress which the preacher gave to the idea that the world to-day is morally worse than ever before. In every period of the world's history— Grecian, Roman, Jewish, and Christian —you could have heard it said—"only the ledger lives, only not all men lie.' Modernity in ethics is largely the *Christian* impulse transferred to the new surroundings through evolution in its onward and upward path.

"The world grows, yet not by chance
It follows some marvellous plan,
Though slow to our thought the advance
God rules the training of man."

The entire service was uplifting and enthusiastic, and closed with Theodore Parker's famous hymn—"O Thou Great Friend to all the sons of men."

Through the great kindness of Dr. John and Mrs. Campbell, Castle Upton, was open to the Congregation after the service, and about 150 came over and were entertained to tea and friendly fellowship.

To our souls was the universe speaking with mystery boundless but vocal,
Music that passeth all words, mighty majestic and free,

Filling our souls with the freshness of spring—a vision of Beauty and Truth;
Stronger to conquer the world, that music shall hallow the future;
Forward we look—God's service is love and concord for ever.

LESSON NOTES FOR TEACHERS.

[To be used in accordance with the Scheme of instruction for 1919, issued by the Sunday School Committee of the N.S.P.C.I.]

June 1st. *The Labourers in the Vineyard* (*The law of the Kingdom*). Read Matthew xx. 1-16. Key Text, Matt. xx. 14.

Introduction. In order to understand this parable properly, we should do our best to think of these men labouring in an Eastern vineyard as being just as real as men working, say, in our shipyards to-day. Their work was to pick the grapes. The master of the vineyard went out early and engaged what he thought would be enough men to start off at the first hour of the morning (6 o'clock). They were to work a 12 hours day (things are somewhat different now!), and get a Roman penny as the day's wage. This penny was worth much more than our penny, and was no doubt regarded as excellent pay for a day. Evidently the master kept realizing that he had not enough men to get the work done, so he went and engaged some more at the third hour (9 a.m.), more at the sixth hour (12 noon), still more at the ninth hour (3 p.m.), and then for the final rush he took in some with only another hour of the day to go at the eleventh hour (5 p.m.). But with these men engaged from the third hour onwards he made no terms, simply saying, "Come and work."

Points 1. *The Payment.* The master gave every man, he who had only worked one hour and he who had worked 12 hours the same pay—a penny. Now, had the men who were engaged to work for the day for a penny not seen what the other fellows got they would have been quite satisfied, which means that they were treated quite *justly*, getting all they expected and deserved. But when they saw that those who had only worked one hour got a penny, they were angry when they only got the same. Why? It was not unfair. They got all they bargained for. At the best, they could only say that the other fellows got too much, which would show them to be envious.

2. *The master's rebuke to envy.* The lesson from this story is: "Do not be envious." If you get all you expect or deserve, then it is envy which leads us to grumble if others get more than we think they expect or deserve. Many a child at school who does not expect a prize for himself, yet feels envious when another child gets one. But is it not far better to rejoice at others' success than to be mean and envious? So long as we are not treated unfairly we have no right to complain except on the miserable ground that nobody ought to fare better than we. But if we remember that the first Christian duty is love, then we shall rejoice when those we love do better than we and sorrow when they fare worse. The more we love the less envy shall we feel.

3. *The new Law of Payment.* But the master of the vineyard laid down a new principle of payment. Many folk hold that one should only be paid for what he earns. That, however, is often very unfair, especially among Christians who profess to love all their fellows. It is unfair because there are many folk willing to work who either are not strong enough or clever enough, or else have not the opportunity to earn enough to keep them decently. If a man becomes lame or sick are he and his family to starve because he cannot *earn* enough to satisfy their needs? Or if a man is willing enough to work, but cannot get a job, is he to starve? We must remember that even those men who were engaged at the eleventh hour had been anxious to work all day, "but no man had hired them." The master mercifully remembered this fact, and also the fact that one penny a day was just as necessary to their families as to those who had been working all day. So he

gave all the same, and then each man was treated justly, because of the rule of mercy.

For elder scholars. N.B. 1. In this world, especially under the rule of competition, there are bound to be differences of reward. But the more we bring the spirit of God's kingdom to reality, the more we shall find that the main thing is to have everyone healthy and happy, and to pay therefore according to *need* rather than *ability*. The ablest will rejoice at helping the weakest.

2. Our Government is already adopting in part the principle of paying according to need. Thus it gives unemployment to those men who, so to speak, are waiting for jobs, but no man has yet hired them.

June 8th. Whit Sunday Lesson. Read John xiv. 1-17. Key text, Gal. v. 22-23.

Introduction. On Whit Sunday we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Christian Church. Fifty days after the Passover, so the story goes, the disciples were still depressed and hopeless at the loss of Jesus, despite their belief that he had risen again. They wanted to feel his presence once more, when suddenly, as they were assembled in a little upper room in Jerusalem, they realized that Jesus was once more present with them, not in the body, but as a powerful spirit of goodness. Henceforth this great event is known as the Feast of Pentecost, or feast of the Fiftieth Day, which we call Whit Sunday.

1. *The nature of the Holy Spirit.* In this beautiful chapter from St. John's Gospel our Lord himself gives a description of the nature of the Holy Spirit which will take the place of his bodily presence. He calls it the Comforter and the Spirit of Truth. The Holy Spirit comforts because it makes us feel the presence round about us of divine forces, which fight with us whenever we try to do right or shew love or bear trouble patiently. We need comfort when we suffer or are disappointed, and it is then that the Christ Spirit comes to our help. We only have to open our hearts trustfully and this Spirit will enter in, like unto, but much more powerful than, the love of our parents and friends. This spirit of comfort is called "the truth," because it gives a true idea of life. So long as we are selfish, greedy, and fretful we see little in life but quarrels, pains, and disappointments. But with the Spirit in our hearts we shall see that life is a heavenly and beautiful thing: we shall see that the world is full of brothers and sisters, some of whom will help us, some of whom we must help. We shall see that difficulties are not such terrible things, but are opportunities for us to show our patience and bravery and love.

2. *The fruit of the Spirit.* See Key text. Those who have the Holy Spirit in their hearts will lead very different lives from those who have it not. They will bear fruit. 1. *Love.* Because Jesus loves us we shall love others. We are not worthy of love unless we are loving. 2. *Joy.* Because Jesus rejoiced to do good, we shall feel a wonderful joy in doing like him. Only loving people really are joyful, because they will be glad to see others, and others will be glad to see them. 3. *Peace.* The followers of the Prince of Peace will always make others peaceful and enjoy peace themselves. Being loving and joyful, they will avoid silly quarrels, and calmly and happily do the right. 4. *Longsuffering.* Having the hope of heaven in our hearts, we shall bear all difficulties patiently. 5. *Kindness.* We shall be kind to others because we are akin to them. Kindness means treating everybody as members of one kin or family—the family of God. 6. *Goodness.* How could we expect the Holy Spirit unless we showed ourselves worthy by leading good lives? 7. *Faithfulness.* The true Christian is faithful even unto death, because he trusts his Leader. We are soldiers in the Army of God, and as good soldiers we must do our duty. 8. *Meekness.* Followers of Christ could not be bullies or braggarts. 9. *Temperance.* Since our bodies are temples of God's Spirit, we are under a sacred obligation to be

pure in thought and word and deed, and to keep our appetites under control. We can't imagine a greedy, immoral, gluttonous, drunken Christian. As for the saying: "Against such there is no law," briefly, this means that we shall not feel our service to be an irksome duty as if we were naughty children being punished, but rather as a joyful privilege, the children gladly helping their loving Father to make everybody good and happy.

June 15. *The Husbandmen* (the *coming of the Kingdom*). Read Matt. xxi. 33-42. Key text, Matt. xxi. 42.

Points 1. *The Vineyard.* The vineyard is the world. Just as a big landlord will let out his land to farmers or manufacturers on condition that they pay him so much, so God, who has made and owns the world, has let it to us for our lifetime on condition that we make Him a proper return. This is a very important point to remember. So many folk, young and old, forget all about God, and seem to think that they owe nothing whatever in return for their life. So they just take all they can when things go well, and grumble when things go ill. But Jesus teaches us that the very fact of our being here at all is a great privilege. *It is God's doing* that we have our physical strength, mental endowments, earth to walk on, air to breathe, food to eat, friends to love. Before we can claim anything as our own doing, we need all these things which are God's doing. Therefore God has a right to demand payment for the use of this life, which is our vineyard. But He differs from the ordinary landlords in this, that, whereas the payment they demand leaves us poorer, the payment God demands makes us richer. He demands gratitude, which means love for Him and desire to do His will. To prove ourselves honest husbandmen we have to show fruits which will be acceptable to God, and these fruits are honourable lives and noble deeds.

2. *The unjust husbandmen.* Do we not think those men very wicked indeed who not only refused to pay what was due to the landlord, but actually maltreated and killed his messengers, even his son? Yet that is precisely what we are always doing towards God. We do not live the good and noble lives which God expects as the payment for the privilege of living on earth. And when God sends His messengers—good men who set before us a higher ideal of life and call on us to repent—we often either fail to listen to them, or else actually ill-teat them. The greatest of all the world's crimes was when we slew God's greatest Son, Jesus, who came not only to ask us, but also to help us, render to God the fruits of love and righteousness.

For elder scholars. The vineyard also has a particular reference to the Jews. They were the chosen people to whom God had granted the greatest of all favours. Yet they had repeatedly rejected and maltreated the great prophets who had come to them exhorting them to bear fruits worthy of a chosen people. Finally, they rejected Jsus.

3. *Jesus, the corner-stone.* See the key text. The wicked husbandmen thought that when they had destroyed the heir they could enjoy their ill-gotten gains in their own way. But they forgot the power of the owner of the vineyard, who in his wrath destroyed them. So the Jews, by rejecting Jesus, lost their place as the chosen messengers of God's will; for where God's Son is there is the chosen people, and so the great privilege of the Jews passed to Christianity. To apply this to our own case, let us make no mistake. God demands worthy fruits of his children, and we must heed the voice of Jesus and make a noble return. If we reject Jesus we reject our right to live. We become selfish, impure, envious, quarrelsome, and as such we have forfeited all rights to the Divine blessing. It matters not that other folk do not heed Jesus. He is still the corner-stone, and withou thim we cannot be built up into worthy temples of God. So, then, in order to bring in the glorious kingdom of God and fit ourselves for heaven, we must build up

our lives around Jesus—not grasping at everything, but giving ourselves in pure and noble deeds. We owe a constant debt to God: only by loving as God loves, can we ever repay it.

June 22. The Marriage Feast (the coming of the Kingdom). Read Matt. xxii. 1-14. Key text, Matt. xxii. 12.

1. *The call to the Feast.* Jesus again makes reference to the failure of the Jews to act as the people of God's choice. The king who made the feast first sent out invitations to all the more important people; then when they refused to respond for some reason or other, he bade his servants call everybody they could find, good and bad. So the Jews, who were certainly in their own eyes the most important people in God's world, ought to have been the first to accept Jesus' call to them to enter the kingdom of God. But for some reason or other (perhaps because Jesus did not come to them in gorgeous array, or behaving in every little detail exactly as they behaved) they refused to respond to his call. Also, it must be remebered that, as in the case of the marriage feast, so with the kingdom: it would seriously interfere with our ordinary selfish pursuits if we would enter it. Therefore, said Jesus to the Jews, since you will not come, your place will be filled with those you despise—the Gentiles, the Sinners, and the Publicans. The moral behind all this is that it is just precisely those folk who think themselves entitled to the best places in the kingdom, who will get left. To be worthy of all God's blessings and to enjoy His heavenly kingdom we have to be willing, first of all, to heed His call, and not to put our own little comforts and selfishnesses first. When the call comes to be good (and it may come in various ways—through a teacher, a parent, or noble example, or in the voice of Jesus speaking in the heart) we must heed it. It matters not how humble or young or weak we are—the call comes to all to do our part in the marriage feast; to be happy ourselves by making others happy.

2. *The wedding garment.* See Key text. The king in this story was a generous and noble man. Although he had invited even the wretched beggars to the feast, he had invited them not as beggars, but as welcome guests, and equal to everybody there. Accordingly he provided wedding garments for them, so that they could leave their rags outside, forget their wretchedness, and enjoy themselves like the guests of king. So that he had every right to be angry with that uncouth, bad-hearted fellow who insisted on making everybody uncomfortable by wearing his old rags, and showing himself an intrusive pauper, rather than (what he was) a welcome guest. When we go to a party we owe it to our host and fellow-guests to lay aside all we can of our own troubles and wretchedness and contribute our share to the general gaiety. Especially does this apply to the kingdom of God. It matters not how hard we have found it to be good, how wretched has been our lot, and how frequent our failures, when we get to the kingdom, we are all welcome guests, and must behave accordingly. What is the wedding garment that every Christian must wear? What else than a happy face? We are not Christians as long as we do our duty, help our fellows, worship God, and so on, with a solemn sour countenance. *We are not Christians until we really enjoy being Christians.* We must do our duty with a laugh, lend a helping hand with a cheery look, and pray to God with a bright light in our eyes.

June 29. Review.

E. H. P.

SIX MONTHS IN A GERMAN PRISON CAMP.

IV.—THE Y.M.C.A. TO THE RESCUE

By Rev. P. Godding, Sec. Lieut.

Readers of a previous article may remember the description of our first services in camp, in our little Protestant barn. How we wrote out our own hymn sheets—and those from memory. Well,

those improvised services lasted for 3 months. Again life in the camp consisted for the most part in attending the German parades, saluting German officers in our promenading round and round our courtyard, taking the food offered us (what there was of it), chatting, brooding, and sleeping. One newly arrived officer did suggest, finding the place so tame, that we might organise a sports day, consisting of running and boxing competitions. But after he had been with us a few days, and began to feel the effec's of the diet, he understood why his suggestion met with no favour.

Unless a man had the power to call to his aid real inner resources, was able to meditate, dream dreams, and generally use the life as a soul-building Retreat, the days were terribly long, and the life generally began to tell on them physically, mentally, and morally.

Then one day a stranger appeared. A young man (looked a litt!e over twenty), dressed in dark grey mufti, with a light-coloured waistcoat, immaculate collar, cuffs and tie, a light grey trilby hat, and a neat, tightly-rolled umbrella. He looked every inch a "knut," and a British one at that! Who was he? What was he doing there? Why wasn't he in khaki?—were the questions we whispered to each other. We edged nearer to try to learn. He was talking to the German Sergeant-Major——in German! A French officer was called over—and he then conversed with him in fluent French. A few minutes later and the Sergeant-Major called me over, and I was introduced. He shook hands (understand why I am writing in details—it was a great day for us—I had not shaken hands with anyone from "outside" for months)—I said he shook hands, amd introduced himself in perfect English. Well, it turned out that he was the Swedish Representative of the International Y.M.C.A.

He was appointed, since 1914, he told us, to look after the social welfare of the English and French Prison Camps. Ours was of comparative recent formation, and he had only just learnt of our existence. Hadn't we thousands of questions to ask him! And he helped us right away. For example: One officer knew that on the very date of his capture his wife had been suddenly taken away to a hospital. That was two months ago—but there had been no communication either way. "I will send a cablegram," he said; and that officer got a telegram in less than a week containing very satisfying news from his wife. A "Tommy" who had been captured over 6 months (kept many months 'behind the line') had received no clothes, or even food, either from his home or his regiment. That was soon and satisfactorily attended to. And we as a camp had no supply of emergency food parcels (i.e., food parcels addressed to no individual, but for "newly captured prisoners"). He arranged (it took over a month, though) that 1,000 parcels be sent to our camp!

"What games have you organised? what clubs formed? have you any useful books? do you give lectures, tuition, hold services?" We held services, we told him, and we told him about the hymn sheets. But he was grieved over our forced negative replies to the other questions. We must change all that, he said. And he did. We had a football sent, and goal posts, and even a pump to blow up the ball. Some tennis balls and racquets; a tennis net, some playing cards, draughtsmen and boards, and chess, dominoes. Also notes, enabling us to give lectures and hold debates. He obtained the promise of a piano (it arrived in a fortnight), and an organ for our services. He deeply interested himself in our services, and a month later I received two dozen small books, hymns, ancient and modern words, and a tune book; some service books, and half a dozen real helpful books for sermon preparation.

He paid us several visits after, brought us more books, persuaded the authorities to provide the canteen with books in English and French. That gave us the opportunity of reading the

volumes in the Tauchnitz Edition—which, as many travelling readers must know, is wonderfully representative of English literature.

When these arrived, and our food, you can imagine our spirits revived and our health began to improve, and the life generally became quite tolerable.

He and I had quite interesting chats, and we learnt news of the outside world. Once when he came I was able to invite him to tea, not on a diet of dandelion juice and black bread, though—but real genuine tea from home—with real, lovely white bread and cakes!

He put us in touch with the educational authorities in London, and a few days before the Armistice was signed I received books on all imaginable educational subjects, — Histories Geographies, Science (Electrical Engineering, Chemistry and Physics), Mathematics, Shorthand and Bookkeeping, &c., &c.

The Germans were always extra good to us, even to being polite, on the days that he arrived.

Do you think, Mr. Editor, your readers would care for an account of Armistice Day in Camp, our subsequent visit to the town outside, and our wonderful journey through Switzerland, France, and Home?

Reports.

Unity Guild—The first outing this session of the Unity Guild was held on Saturday, the 24th May, to Helen's Tower, when a party of 40 left the Central Hall by motor charabanc, and were joined on arrival at the Tower by 10 of our junior members who had cycled. We were very fortunate in having glorious weather, and a very enjoyable afternoon was spent.

The Annual Service of the Guild was held in All Souls' Church on Sunday afternoon, the 25th May, the service being conducted by the Rev. M. Watkins, President. The attendance, which numbered between 50 and 60, was not as good as it ought to have been, considering our membership. During his discourse Mr. Watkins regretted the lack of interest taken by the members in the religious side of the work of the Guild, but thought that this was perhaps a denominational failing. The collection, which was taken on behalf of the Belfast Hospital for Sick Children, Queen Street, amounted to £2. 3s. 0d.

* *

Downpatrick.—The annual report for the year has just been issued, and shows considerable improvement, twenty-one members having increased their church payments. There are nine new members, and four families have rejoined, while the Junior Member Roll now totals seventy-four. After paying off a small deficit and an outstanding account, an additional £11 10s. has been paid to the minister, Rev. Ralph Philipson. A social gathering of the congregation is being arranged for June, when it is hoped to have a deputation from the Laymen's Committee regarding ministerial stipends. A harmonium has been bought for the Sunday-school in town, and the summer school at Hollymount has been re-opened. A special effort is being made in connection with the Sunday evening country services, and a programme of soloists has been arranged. The Secretary, Mr. Hugh Dickson, has been congratulated by the congregation on being appointed Chairman of the Town Commissioners and a Justice of the Peace.

* *

Holywood.—The Annual Prize Distribution of the Sunday School took place on Sunday, May 4th. Following the time honoured custom, the scholars brought flowers, which, together with the collection, were forwarded to the Belfast Hospital for Sick Children. The prizes were distributed by Miss Patterson, who in a neat little address recalled old memories of the Sunday School. The special prizes given by Mrs. Gardiner were awarded to James Meneely and Beatrice Meneely.

Our Congregation, having in mind the increased cost of living, recently

decided to make their minister a presentation by way of bonus. As a result, the Rev. G. L. Phelps has received a cheque for £100 "as a practical mark of the esteem in which you are held by our Congregation."

* *

Newry.—The Annual Meeting of the members of this Church was held in the Schoolroom attached to the Church on Tuesday evening, 25th March. There was a large attendance of members, and the room was nicely decorated for the occasion by the following:—The Misses Warnock and Miss Eliza and Ada Mitchell and Messrs. A. and James Thompson. At four o'clock the children attending the Sunday School were entertained to tea and cake. The tea tables were presided over by Mrs. Slipper, Miss Slipper, and the Misses Warnock. After the good things provided had been done full justice to, games were entered into, and the youngsters enjoyed themselves heartily for some time. Shortly before seven o'clock the parents of the children and other members of the Church assembled, and the business of the Annual Meeting was entered upon. The respected pastor of the Congregation (Rev. George J. Slipper) presided, and opened the proceedings with devotional exercise, after which he called upon Mr. R. J. M'Comb to read the report of the Committee. The report showed that the Sunday services were fairly well maintained throughout the year. As far as the finances were concerned, there were increases in the stipend list. The Committee regretted to state that the death-roll of members was very large during the year. Before the close of 1917 Mr. Albert Scott, of Dublin, for many years an elder and trustee of the Congregation, passed to his reward; also during the year other members of the Church were called away by the grim reaper Death, amongst them being Miss Hill, of Derramore, a respected member of the Congregation, the Misses Jeannie, Sarah, and Maggie Mitchell, Mrs. Jas. Hughes, Mrs. J. Mitchell Mrs. Hanna, and Messrs. James Thompson, Ballinlare, and Robert Cunningham, Benagh. The Chairman, in moving the adoption of the report, paid a warm tribute to the memory of those who had been called to their reward—some of them in their youthful prime, and others in the fulness of years, but each and every one of them was deeply regretted and sadly missed in their places in the Congregation. Mr. Robert Rowland seconded the motion, and the report was adopted. Mr. Christopher Warnock Treasurer ,n extsubmitted his report, which showed that the finances of the Church were in a healthy and sound condition. He then moved the adoption of same. Mr. John M'Comb seconded, and the report was passed. On the motion of Mr. Walter Scott, the Committee for the year was appointed. The Chairman then announced that the prizes gained by the pupils for good attendance would be distributed by Miss Warnock. Mr. Warnock, Superintendent, read the list, and Miss Warnock kindly presented valuable books to the successful scholars, who were loudly applauded on going forward to receive same. This concluded the business part of the meeting. An enjoyable programme was then enterred upon, when songs were rendered by Mrs. Slipper and Mrs. Dalton in a very pleasing manner, Mrs. Slipper presiding at the piano. A sketch, entitled "Tilda's New Hat," was next gone through, and created great amusement, the principal artistes being—Miss Berry; "Mrs. Fisherwick"; "Tilda," her daughter, Mrs. W. E. Dalton; Miss Ina M'Comb, and Mr. Albert Megaw, visitors. All the performers truly filled their respective parts exceedingly well, Mrs. Dalton especially personating the obedient daughter to perfection. On the motion of Mr. Warnock, seconded by Mr. Scott, a hearty vote of than wasks passed by acclamation to Mrs. Slipper, the organist, and the Choir, and the ladies who had presided at the tea tables, and all who had contributed to the entertainment. The proceedings concluded with the singing of the National Anthem. As the children

passed out they were supplied with buns and cake.

In our account of the wedding reported last month between Mr. Stanley M'Kinstry and Miss Edna Slipper, we omitted to mention that the presents were numerous and costly, numbering indeed one hundred and twenty, of which four stand out with special interest, viz.—one from the Church members generally, one from the Newry Reading Circle, which is in connection with the Municipal Free Library of the town, one from Dr. Barnardo's Sewing Circle, and one from the employees of the mill of which Mr. M'Kinstry is the manager.

The Bible will take care of itself, if all teachers, in the school or in the pulpit, will so use it as to let it shine by its own light.

The curse of venereal disease, says the "Inquirer" has long since assumed such terrible proportions that conventional reticence would be culpable, and many grave and outspoken references have been made to it recently. According to information which cannot be doubted, the armies have been tragically crippled by sexual vice, and the men in the Rhine country are now said to be specially victims. The alarm and disgust of American and Canadian parents have been intense, and untiring efforts have been made to counteract the evil. Ministers attending the Whit week Meetings are invited by Lieut.-Col. Bullock, who has had charge of this matter, to see an exhibition of his Sociological Films, which have been prepared to instruct and warn the men of the frightful nature of the scourge. The exhibition will take place at the Eagle Hut, Strand, on Thursday, June 12, at 2-30 p.m.

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